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Editorial

ENROLMENT IN HIGH-SCHOOL STUDIES

The statistics of enrolment in certain high-school subjects, published from time to time in the *Reports of the United States Commissioner of Education*, are often referred to and possibly are too well known to warrant reprinting here. Yet, while the statistics are interesting to all teachers, the *Reports* are not always accessible, nor does one always know where to lay his hand on a reprint of the tables; evidence that the statistics are not known to everyone is not infrequently found in educational articles; and the *Report* for 1911 tells us that its statistics will be unchanged for some years, since they are to be collected in the future only once in five years. These considerations seem to us to justify the printing of the tables.

The *Report* gives three tables, one for public high schools, one for private, and one for public and private combined. We give only the first and last, since a comparison of these two indicates the condition of the private schools with sufficient accuracy for most purposes. They are taken from pp. xli and xliii, Vol. II, of the *Report* for 1911.

Naturally it has never been possible to get reports from all schools, but the tables are based on reports from so large a majority of the schools that one could not expect the percentages to be changed materially by the missing reports. The total attendance in public and private high schools in 1910 is given elsewhere as 1,131,496, while the percentages given in the table for that year are based on reports from schools having a total attendance of something more than 800,000.

STUDENTS IN CERTAIN COURSES AND STUDIES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOLS COMBINED

	1890			1895			1900			1905			1910		
	Students	Per cent of Total		Students	Per cent of Total		Students	Per cent of Total		Students	Per cent of Total		Students	Per cent of Total	
Latin	100,144	33.62		205,006	43.76		314,856	49.97		391,067	49.69		405,502	49.59	
Greek	12,869	4.32		22,159	4.73		24,869	3.95		17,158	2.18		10,739	1.31	
French	28,032	9.41		45,746	9.77		65,684	10.43		89,777	11.40		95,671	11.70	
German	34,208	11.48		58,921	12.58		94,873	15.06		160,006	20.34		102,933	23.60	
Spanish													5,283	0.65	
Algebra	127,397	42.77		245,465	52.40		347,013	55.08		444,092	56.43		405,375	56.92	
Geometry	59,781	20.07		114,813	24.51		108,518	26.75		219,083	27.84		252,404	39.87	
Trigonometry				15,243	3.25		15,268	2.42		17,256	2.19		17,864	2.18	
Astronomy				24,690	5.27		21,595	3.43		13,597	1.76		7,210	0.88	
Physics	63,644	21.36		103,768	22.15		118,936	18.88		123,282	15.61		120,910	14.79	
Chemistry	28,665	9.62		43,607	9.31		59,431	8.00		55,414	7.04		58,290	7.13	
Physical Geography				105,124	22.44		144,135	22.88		165,631	21.05		159,500	19.14	
Geology				25,866	5.52		25,300	4.02		20,596	2.62		11,251	1.38	
Zoölogy													64,428	7.88	
Botany													133,667	16.34	
Physiology				131,304	28.03		169,844	26.96		171,859	21.84		128,836	15.76	
Psychology				15,677	3.35		20,126	3.19		14,540	1.84		11,004	1.35	
Rhetoric				146,672	31.31		237,502	37.70		372,266	47.30		462,711	56.59	
English Literature							259,493	41.19		378,819	48.14		466,477	57.05	
History (other than United States)							228,134	37.80		318,775	40.50		455,200	55.67	
Civil Government	82,909	27.83		162,336	34.65		132,863	21.09		140,459	17.85		136,740	15.99	
Agriculture													37,203	4.55	
Domestic Economy													33,866	4.14	

These tables well repay study, and particularly by those who fear that the more substantial and cultural portions of the secondary curriculum are not holding their own. When such statistics were first published, fifteen years ago or more, it was seen that high-school work was tending to concentrate on a few central studies. In spite of attacks on some of these subjects, in spite of the propaganda for sundry more practical and vocational subjects, we now find this same tendency still more clearly at work and the same studies holding the first place. The great high-school subjects are English, mathematics, history, and Latin. German is increasing rapidly, but has not yet half as many pupils as Latin. No other subject gives any (statistical) promise of approaching greatness. Excluding those subjects which appear in the tables for the first time in 1910, the only subjects which are making any relative increase are French, German, mathematics, chemistry, English, and history. Of these the most noticeable is chemistry, slight as its increase is, since the sciences as a whole have been losing ground from the beginning, doubtless because of their increasing standards of efficiency and of laboratory equipment.

But what of Latin? The immediate impetus to print these tables was supplied by one of the amusing, but not wholly negligible, extracts from an "educational" article quoted in the *Classical Weekly* of March 1: "Any teacher who maintains by magazine article or private conversation that the study of Latin is not rapidly dying in the American public high school is either blind to the drift of educational tendencies or is like the small politician, always verbally sure of election during his campaign speeches. He is a mere mouthpiece for educational white lies." Whether the Commissioner of Education escapes falling under this condemnation depends partly on the writer's definition of rapid death, partly on whether he was thinking of the relative or the absolute number of Latin students. Relatively to the total number of students Latin fell off in the public high schools from 50.21 per cent to 49.05 per cent during the five years from 1905 to 1910; absolutely it gained. The total number of students in the public high schools is given as 695,989, in 1905, 938,437 in 1910. If the percentages given for the reporting schools held true for all schools, the number

of Latin students was 349,456 in 1905, 460,303 in 1910 a gain of 110,847. The showing is still better in the combined public and private schools for there the relative decrease is one-tenth of 1 per cent in the five years, and the absolute increase is from 435,309 to 561,094, a gain of 125,785. And when one reflects that the enormously rapid growth in high-school attendance is at least partly due to changes in the curriculum calculated to attract students who neither would nor could study Latin successfully he may fairly feel that the figures represent a genuine relative gain for Latin among those qualified to profit by its study.

THE NINTH ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting at Indianapolis was well attended, in spite of the difficulties of travel incident to the recent floods. In a program full of interesting papers, perhaps the most notable feature was the group of papers exhibiting great and constructive interest in classical studies by men not professionally connected with this department. Two of these papers, "The Classical Tradition and the Study of English," and "The Value of the Classics to Students in English," presented by Professor Buck of the University of Nebraska, and Professor Denny of the Ohio State University, respectively, offered a strong argument for the classics, the stronger for the fact that the writers were professors, not of Greek and Latin, but of English. The third paper, "The Value of the Classics in Modern Education," written by Dr. Charles P. Steinmetz had still further weight because the writer speaks from a world supposed to be especially indifferent, if not hostile, to humanistic studies. Dr. Steinmetz is superintendent of the General Electrical Company, Schenectady, N.Y., and is himself his own best argument in support of his theme; for he proves that the enlightening and informing influences of classical studies can accompany their devotees into the practical world of business as well as into the quieter and more sympathetic seclusion of college walls.

Aside from the routine business of election of officers (see the third cover page of the *Journal*), the following items will be of general interest: